

**Factors influencing blood donation at selected sites in Nairobi, Kenya**

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## ABSTRACT

Blood donation has been used as a universal remedy for many centuries all over the world. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that blood should only be collected from voluntary, non-remunerated donors. With new medical advances, there is increased demand for blood and blood products but in many countries, including Kenya, this demand has never been met. The objective of this study was to determine knowledge levels about blood donation amongst potential adult donors at selected sites in Nairobi, their attitude towards donation of blood and subsequently what factors, both negative and positive, influence their blood donation. A total of 456 adults aged 18-65 were selected through consecutive sampling at 3 sites in Nairobi within a period of 4 months from November 2010 to February 2011. Information was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire on socio demographic characteristics, perception concerning risks of donation and opinions on motivational and deterrent factors to donating blood. Data was analysed using SPSS version 10. It was found that 41% of the respondents had donated blood in the past but 59% had not. There was no significant difference between the numbers of males and females who had ever donated blood ( $P>0.50$ ). The main reasons for donation were altruism (33.7%) and duty (32.1%). Other reasons were encouragement by a friend to donate (13.9%), hearing media appeal for blood (11.8%) and being compelled to donate at school (3.7%). Analysis on participants' opinions about what hinders individuals from donating blood revealed that the two most frequent responses were fear of having their HIV status checked (31.6%) and ignorance/lack of knowledge about blood donation (21.5%). Others included fear of pain, anaemia and infection from use of contaminated needles. Most of the participants (68.9%) were of the opinion that enhanced education of the public about blood donation would encourage more people to donate blood. Multivariate analysis was done to identify independent predictors of donating blood ( $p<0.05$ ). This analysis revealed that respondents who were currently willing to donate blood or thought that there was relatively small risk of acquiring a disease through blood donation or who thought that lack of time

was not a hindrance to blood donation were likely to have donated blood in the past. This study shows that despite numerous media campaigns, enhanced education of the public is needed specifically addressing the fears that plague the potential blood donor so as to be able to recruit more blood donors and thus meet national targets.